

Remarks/Arguments:

The pending claims are 1, 2, 5-7 and 10.

Claims 1-2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Hattori (JP 9-225990). Claim 1 has been amended to recite, in part:

a slit for allowing said liquid distributed in said manifold to pass therethrough

* * * * *

said slit including a first portion disposed in the manifold. . .the first portion of the slit having an adjustable gap;

a first forming member forming the gap along a wall of said first portion of said slit;

a displacing mechanism coupled to said first forming member for changing the gap of said first portion of said slit. . .

Hattori does not disclose these features.

Hattori has a slit having two portions, 15, 6. Slit portion 15 is adjacent manifold 5. Hattori does not disclose a first portion of a slit in the manifold having an adjustable gap nor a first forming member forming the gap along a wall of the first portion of the slit in the manifold. Since Hattori does not disclose any of the above features, it also does not disclose a displacing mechanism coupled to the recited first forming member for changing the gap of the first forming portion of the recited slit.

Having an adjustable gap in the manifold has certain advantages. The ability to change the gap of the slit in the manifold solves a number of problems that exist in prior art devices. As explained in the background section of the present application, pressure in the conventional manifold is not uniform along the coating width due to a pressure loss. Consequently, liquid at regions having higher pressures is applied more than that at regions having lower pressures and liquid is not applied uniformly along the coating width. (page 1, lines 19-25). The apparatus described in amended claim 1 can change the gap of the slit in the manifold thus changing internal pressure in the nozzle for changing an amount of the applied liquid along the coating width. Narrowing the gap increases the amount of applied liquid at both ends of the coating width more than at the center of the width. Widening the gap increases the amount of

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applied liquid at the center more than at the ends. These adjustments thereby apply the liquid uniformly. (page 5, lines 4-12).

For all of the above reasons, amended claim 1 and dependent claim 2 are not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Hattori.

Claim 1 has also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP4-363167 and JP 10005660. Neither of these references discloses or suggests an extrusion type nozzle comprising a block having a manifold with a slit having a first portion disposed in the manifold, along with the other features recited above. The English language Abstracts of these publications do not identify a manifold in any of their figures. (In comparison, Hattori referenced above expressly identified a manifold 5 in addition to slit portions 15, 6.) Accordingly, as above, neither of these references disclose or suggest a

slit including a first portion disposed in the manifold. . .the first portion of the slit having an adjustable gap;

a first forming member forming the gap along a wall of said first portion of said slit

a displacing mechanism coupled to said first forming member for changing the gap. (emphasis added)

For these reasons, therefore, amended claim 1 is not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP4-363167 and JP 10005660.

Claims 1-2 and 5-7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ulcej (U.S. Patent No. 6,206,680) and JP 10005660. Page 5, line 2 of the Office Action contends that Ulcej discloses "an extrusion type nozzle comprising a block (items 12B and 12) having a manifold for distributing liquid along a coating width." Applicants respectfully disagree with the contention that Ulcej discloses a manifold. The term "manifold" does not appear in the Ulcej disclosure. Ulcej discloses a flow control device 10 within an extrusion die 12. The flow control device 10 is disposed with die cavity 14. (col. 2, lines 43-45). There is no disclosure or suggestion that Ulcej also has a manifold; particularly a manifold having a first portion of a slit as described in amended claim 1. Similarly, although the English language Abstract of

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JP10005660 discloses a passage 22 formed by a pair of passage blocks 13 and a taper block 14, there is no disclosure that JP 10005660 also has a manifold with a slit as described in amended claim 1. Accordingly, amended claim 1 and dependent claims 2 and 5-7 are not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ulcej and JP 10005660.

Claims 1-2 and 5-7 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ulcej and Hattori. Applicants incorporate by reference all of the arguments they have made above regarding Ulcej and Hattori. For all of those reasons, claims 1-2 and 5-7 are not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ulcej and Hattori.

Claim 10 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kamikihara (U.S. Patent No. 6,344,088) in view of Ulcej and Hattori. Claim 10 has been amended in a manner that is similar to the way in which claim 1 has been amended. For example, amended claim 10 now recites, in part, "said slit including a first portion disposed in the manifold." Amended claim 10 also includes additional recitations that are similar to the recitations that have been added to amended claim 1. Figures 1 and 3 of Kamikihara disclose a manifold 6. (col. 4, line 21; col. 5, line 25). Fluid is pushed out of manifold 6 to slit 7 where the fluid is discharged from the outlets of slit 7. (col. 5, lines 7-8, 23-26). Figures 2 and 3 also show a slit gap adjustment means 15 on top of upper block 11 and movable parts 18 which narrow or broaden the slit gap. (col. 5, lines 31-41). Kamikihara does not disclose or suggest a first portion of the slit being in the manifold. As discussed above, neither Ulcej nor Hattori contain any such disclosure or suggestion either. Accordingly, amended claim 10 is not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kamikihara in view of Ulcej and Hattori.

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For all of the above reasons, applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 2, 5-7, and 10 are now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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